

## **Suggested Talking Points**

**Steven Edminster**  
**Deputy Chief, Office of Economic**  
**Development and Governance, USAID**

Launching of the Partnership Between  
Gawad Kalinga and Visayan Forum Foundation, Inc.  
9 October 2007, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon  
GK Baseco Compound  
Tondo, Manila

### Acknowledgements:

- Acknowledge guests (list will be provided later)

### VF and GK Partnership:

- Today, we are all witnesses to the beginning of the partnership of the Visayan Forum and Gawad Kalinga to fight human trafficking.
- The Visayan Forum and Gawad Kalinga are two organizations, which on their own have made significant contributions in helping improve the lives of Filipinos.
- As we all know, the Visayan Forum is at the forefront of providing services to trafficking victims by managing Halfway Houses constructed by the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) in major Philippines ports. Later this year, VF will open a new Halfway House at NAIA constructed by the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA).
- The Visayan Forum is also known for its pioneering efforts to assist domestic workers in the Philippines, especially in pushing for the Domestic Workers Bill or the Batas Kasambahay.
- The Visayan Forum's partnership with the Philippine government and private shipping companies in the fight against trafficking in persons was

hailed as an international best practice by the U.S. State Department in its 2005 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report.

- The Gawad Kalinga has become a global name and has been recognized for community leadership. Through its volunteers, the Gawad Kalinga mobilizes and empowers poor communities by providing shelter, health services, education and livelihood programs. Gawad Kalinga has helped awaken and revived the spirit of cooperation and generosity among Filipinos worldwide.
- Gawad Kalinga, through its partnership with the Visayan Forum, is now set to mobilize communities to prevent human trafficking and protect victims.

### **USG Assistance on TIP:**

- No person and no country are safe from human trafficking.
- The battle against human trafficking is a high priority for the US government (USG).
- The USG funds anti-trafficking programs to prevent human trafficking, assist victims, and support the prosecution of traffickers.
- In June of this year, the U.S. Department of State released the sixth annual Trafficking in Persons Report. Although the Philippines remained on Tier 2, the report recognized the significant efforts made by the Philippine Government, with the support of many NGOs, in combating TIP. The report noted the efforts the Philippines has made to prevent the trafficking of migrant workers and to protect those who were exploited abroad.
- The USG supports local NGOs like the Visayan Forum which works to protect trafficking victims by operating and managing halfway houses in major Philippine ports and airports
- The USG supports a number of anti-trafficking projects in partnership with the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), various government agencies and NGOs.

- USAID, in particular, has been supporting the IACAT in a number of activities such as:
  - Filipino Initiative Against Trafficking (FIAT) – roadshow in various areas such as Zamboanga City, Davao City, Tacloban City, Dumaguete City, Baguio City, Lucena City, Tuguegarao City.
  - Training programs for prosecutors, enforcers, social workers, consular officers, airport personnel.
  - Development and distribution of materials and manuals on TIP.

**Closing:**

- On behalf of USAID, I would like to congratulate the Visayan Forum and Gawad Kalinga for formalizing their partnership to work together to fight human trafficking.
- We certainly hope that your partnership and efforts will lead to more successful interventions against trafficking in persons, and thus, help to save more lives and provide dignity and peace to every Filipino.